

Parish: Polstead

Location: Frogs Hall, Martens Lane

Proposal: Erection of 1 no. agricultural store and 1 No. stable building. Retention of vehicular access.

Applicant: Mr and Mrs P Lewis

Case Officer: Ben Elvin

Date for Determination: 12/02/08

SITE

1. Frogs Hall lies in the countryside and is accessed off Martens Lane, a single-track lane. The land falls considerably from the road level and the existing dwelling sits in a recessed position within a valley.
2. There are a number of footpaths in the area, two of which cross the land. One of these is a RUPP, which formed the previous access to the site.
3. The site lies within the Dedham Vale and Stour Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

PROPOSAL

4. The application proposes the erection of an agricultural store building (measuring 18 metres long and 10 metres wide with a maximum ridge height of 5 metres) and a block of 10 stables (measuring 18 metres by 28 metres with a maximum height of 5 metres).
5. The application also seeks permission to retain an existing access road that has been constructed that runs from Martens Lane down into the valley in which the dwelling is sited.
6. A Design and Access Statement has been submitted which makes the following points;
 - Total site area is approximately 18.2 hectares (45 acres) and is a registered small holding.
 - Mr and Mrs Lewis intend to graze their own horses on the land.
 - The site was previously used for rearing game birds.
 - There are no suitable buildings on the site that could be utilised.
 - The stables will be of timber framed construction with weatherboard finish and a profile metal sheeting to the roof.
 - The store building will have horizontal boarding with a dark timber stain and colour coated box profile steel roof sheeting.
 - The access was carried out to serve the replacement dwelling that was granted under permission B06/00540. The owner did this on the understanding that planning permission was not required for a residential access onto an unclassified road.

RELEVANT HISTORY

7. B93/00872 (1993) – Agricultural notification – erection of open bay cart shed.
8. B06/00540 (2006) – Planning permission granted for the erection of a detached three-storey dwelling and detached cartlodge (following demolition of existing dwelling and outbuildings).

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

8. PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development.
9. PPS7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas.

PLANNING POLICIES

10. The following Development Plan policies are applicable to the proposal:
 - **CR01** – Landscaping Quality
 - **CR02** – AONB Landscape
 - **CR07** – Landscaping Schemes
 - **CR08** - Hedgerows
 - **CN01** - General Design
 - **EN03** – Protected Species

This report only includes policy references. For further details please see Page 4.

OBSERVATIONS

11. PC – have made the following points:
 - Concern with regards to the size of the stable building and whether this would become a stabling business, thus increasing traffic on Martens Lane which was already causing concern for local residents.
 - The vehicular access causes concern as does the future use of the stables and the increase of traffic in Martens Lane.
 - The Parish Council wants to see suitable landscaping alongside the access road i.e. hedging.
10. LHA – no objections, subject to conditions.
11. SWT – no objections.
12. NE – no objections.
13. SCC Countryside Access – no objections.

REPRESENTATIONS

14. One letter of objection has been received which makes the following points:
 - Martens Lane is historic and has been turned into a future by road for heavy goods vehicles.
 - The tarmac entrance to Martens Lane is unsightly.
 - The large stable and agricultural store are not needed and will only result in pressure for change of use.
 - The site looks like the entrance to an industrial site.
15. Three letters of support have been received which make the following comments:
 - The site has been a shambles and the improvement of the land has to be welcomed.
 - The entrance gates will hardly be noticeable in two years time.
 - The proposal will enhance the area.
 - Walkers in the area have noted that until now Frogs Hall has been out of keeping with the area.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

16. The site lies in an area where the character of the landscape requires special protection. There are longer views that exist over this land from the south of the valley. The proposed buildings would not however be visible from Martens Lane due to the sloping nature of the land.
17. The storage building would be set on a level section of ground to the north-west of the existing dwelling. This area of land benefits from mature hedging/trees to the west, north and south and the proposed building will have little impact on the landscape character. The store is required to house the necessary equipment, that is required to maintain the holding.
18. There are some existing stable buildings that lie to the south of the site proposed for the new stables. These are in a very poor condition, and could not be brought back into use without being re-built. There are access problems in reaching these stables proposed, where the previous access runs along the RUPP and has fallen away in places. This access would not appear capable of taking any heavy traffic that may need to serve the site.
19. In looking at the longer views into the site, the proposed stables would sit in a low lying area and would be unlikely to be visible from these longer views. A scheme of landscaping in and around the proposed stables will be necessary to ensure that the character of the area is enhanced and that any views that do exist will be further obscured. Indeed, a comprehensive landscaping scheme for the whole site will be required.
20. The access road that has been constructed crosses one of the footpaths that runs east-west across the land. The applicant has indicated that he intends to provide a post and rail fence along the length of both sides of the access with hedge planting to soften the impact. The access at Martens Lane has been formed with post and rail fencing and wooden gates set back behind the existing hedgerow. The wide splay will need to be surfaced with a bound impervious material in order to ensure that there is no escape of material onto Martens Lane. These details are considered to be appropriate in principle but will need to be controlled by condition to ensure that a suitable planting/landscaping scheme and access construction is achieved and implemented.
21. The sloping nature of the site does benefit the scheme in terms of the visibility from Martens Lane. There are existing hedgerows along the lane which provide a significant screen when travelling along Martens Lane. The proposed access does cut through a large area of land but provides a suitable means of serving this site given the condition of the previous access referred to above.
22. In looking at protected species in this area, Suffolk Wildlife Trust do not consider that the proposals should cause any detriment and do not require any further mitigation/investigation.
23. The current owners of the site are intending to implement the previous permission granted for the replacement dwelling (B06/00540). The land/site is clearly in need of substantial work to bring it back into a condition that is in character with the surrounding area.
24. In conclusion, the proposal puts forward a scheme that takes advantage of the sloping nature of the site to best effect. A scheme of landscaping for the site, including the retention/protection of the existing hedgerows and trees, will be necessary and will provide an opportunity to seek further landscape enhancement. The access would not result in any detriment to highway safety and will enable the buildings and dwelling to be served successfully. The access details will also need to be controlled by condition.

REASON FOR APPROVAL

The proposed stable and storage buildings are considered to be in accordance with policies CR01, CR02 and CN01 by virtue of their form, materials and siting, which takes advantage of the falling

slope of the land and would not result in detriment to the character of the landscape. The access road would not give rise to highway safety issues and does not detract from the character of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in which it is located. The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with the provisions of the Babergh local Plan Alteration No.2 (2006).

RECOMMENDATION

Grant planning permission subject to the following conditions;

- Materials
- Hard and soft landscaping scheme
- Hedge/Tree retention
- External lighting
- Access surfacing
- As required by LHA